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Statement submitted by Global Alliance for Women's Health, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 30 and 31 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

* E/2010/100.

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Statement

Women and non-communicable diseases

The Global Alliance for Women's Health urges the Economic and Social Council, at its annual ministerial review, to take note of the resolution on the prevention and control of non-communicable diseases (A/RES/64/265) adopted by the General Assembly at its sixty-fourth session. Data show that women around the world are uniquely and often more severely affected by non-communicable diseases. While recent actions, including the resolution, draw much-needed attention to this growing global epidemic, more work must be done to prevent women's health from being further compromised by these diseases. Continued inaction will impede the realization of all goals relating to gender empowerment and equality worldwide.

Consider the following data regarding the complications and co-morbidity faced by women with non-communicable diseases:

- Heart disease and stroke kill more women each year than cancer, tuberculosis, HIV/AIDS and malaria combined.
- While incidence levels of type 2 diabetes are roughly equal, females have a higher proportion of excess death from diabetes compared to males.
- Women show a relatively higher incidence of small cell lung cancer compared with men.
- After age 50, women are affected by osteoarthritis more often than men. In women over 45 years of age, osteoporosis accounts for more days spent in hospital than many other diseases, including diabetes, myocardial infarction and breast cancer.
- Women are at greater risk for Alzheimer's disease.

The reproductive years pose additional distinctive challenges to a woman's health. The prevalence of diabetes during pregnancy is as high as 30 per cent among high-risk populations. This complication threatens the healthy development of the foetus and can also severely compromise the woman's ability for a healthy delivery.

Women are often the primary caregivers in the home. If the woman is afflicted with a disease herself, her ability to care for her family unit is weakened. This situation is exacerbated by inadequate access to care. The result is the decline of the well-being of the family unit, as well as a diminished capacity to contribute to the community and perform actions that would support empowerment and promote equality.

By elevating the level of attention and action to combat the global growth in the incidence of non-communicable diseases, the Council will directly increase the opportunities and likelihood of women worldwide to achieve equality and empowerment.